

Law student orientations emphasize ethics and professionalism

August 6, 2012

Ethics and professionalism are essential to the practice of law. That's the message which Mississippi Supreme Court Chief Justice Bill Waller Jr. will give students entering two Mississippi law schools.

Chief Justice Waller will give the keynote address to first year law students at Mississippi College School of Law at 8:30 a.m. Wednesday, Aug. 8, on the second floor of the B.C. Rogers Student Center on the Clinton campus of Mississippi College. Mississippi College School of Law Dean Jim Rosenblatt and Mississippi Bar President Lemuel G. Adams also will address students. Breakout sessions are scheduled for 10 a.m., and a luncheon will begin at noon.

Chief Justice Waller also will be the keynote speaker at the University of Mississippi School of Law's orientation at 9:30 a.m. Aug. 16 at the Robert C. Khayat Law Center in Oxford. University of Mississippi School of Law Dean Richard Gershon and Adams also will address students.

Chief Justice Waller will administer a Professionalism Oath to the Mississippi College law students. He said, "Ethics, professionalism and civility are essential to the legal profession. Law students must understand and embrace these principles of the legal profession before they begin their academic studies in law."

"I and other justices, judges and practicing attorneys enjoy meeting the students and helping to give them a firm foundation in ethics and professionalism. This is something we do each year," Chief Justice Waller said.

The annual James O. Dukes Law School Professionalism Program is sponsored by the Mississippi Bar as part of orientation for students entering law school. The program is named in honor of its founder, the late James O. Dukes of Gulfport, a former Mississippi Bar president.

Dean Rosenblatt said, "The program held during the second day of orientation allows experienced attorneys and judges to meet in small groups with the new law students to talk about professionalism in the legal community and discuss factual scenarios. The program is designed to stress the importance of ethics and professionalism and to impress upon these new students how important is adherence to ethical standards."

Dean Rosenblatt said, "This Dukes Professionalism Program is critical to starting our students with a proper perspective on how to operate in the legal community. We are grateful to our experienced attorneys and judges who volunteer to lead the sessions and engage with our students early in their legal education. We are part of a very special legal community that has a commitment to the education and mentorship of future attorneys."

About 25 current and former judges and more than 50 attorneys are scheduled to participate in Wednesday's program at Mississippi College. Judges expected to participate in the program include Supreme Court Presiding Justice George C. Carlson Jr. of Batesville, Justice Ann H. Lamar of Senatobia, Justice Leslie D. King of Greenville, Justice Randy G. Pierce of Leakesville; Mississippi Court of Appeals Chief Judge Joe Lee of Jackson,

Presiding Judge T. Kenneth Griffis Jr. of Ridgeland, and Judge Larry E. Roberts of Meridian; Chancellors Debbra K. Halford of Meadville, D. Neil Harris Sr. of Pascagoula, James B. Persons of Gulfport, George M. Ward of Natchez, and Patricia D. Wise of Jackson; Circuit Judges Vernon Cotten of Carthage, Lisa P. Dodson of Gulfport, Forrest A. Johnson Jr. of Natchez, Winston L. Kidd of Jackson, Robert Krebs of Pascagoula, Isadore W. Patrick Jr. of Vicksburg, and Albert B. Smith III of Cleveland; Pike County Court Judges John P. Price of Magnolia; U.S. District Judge Keith Starrett of Hattiesburg; former Justice Fred L. Banks Jr. of Jackson, former Court of Appeals Judge Mary Libby Payne of Pearl, former Chancellor Larry J. Buffington of Collins, and former County Court Judge Maxine Lawson-Conway of Moss Point.

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